



**METROPOLITAN  
TRANSPORTATION  
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***Memorandum***

TO: Bay Bridge Design Task Force

DATE: September 22, 2000

FR: Steve Heminger

RE: Army Corps of Engineers report

As you may have seen in press reports, the Army Corps of Engineers released a report today answering the first of two questions it has been retained to review in an attempt to end the impasse over construction of the new east span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. The first question concerns whether Caltrans made the right decision in choosing to replace the east span with a new structure rather than retrofit the existing bridge. Key findings from the Corps report are as follows:

- Documents reviewed by the Corps did not demonstrate that any retrofit alternative met "lifeline" criteria which would ensure that the bridge could be used on an emergency basis immediately after an earthquake.
- Caltrans' lifecycle cost analysis suggests that the decision to select a replacement alternative may have been made even if the retrofit alternative construction costs were substantially less.
- Based on safety considerations, it is the Corps' conclusion that a replacement alternative is preferable to a retrofit alternative. "A replacement alternative is the path that most quickly resolves the exposure of the public to the seismic vulnerabilities of the existing structure."

Although the report does contain some criticism of Caltrans' retrofit design plans that were eventually abandoned in favor of replacing the east span in 1996, the Corps "does not disagree with the decision process" that led to the selection and ultimate abandonment of the retrofit design.

The second question to be answered by the Corps study is whether the replacement design recommended by your Engineering Design and Advisory Panel (EDAP) and approved by the Commission is seismically safe. The second report is due to be released on October 17, the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Loma Prieta earthquake.

If you need any further information, please call me at (510) 464-7810.

cc: Denis Mulligan, Caltrans



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## *Memorandum*

TO: Bay Bridge Design Task Force

DATE: October 11, 2000

FR: Steve Heminger

RE: U.S. DOT Land Transfer

Attached is a press statement from U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater announcing that he will use special authority granted him under federal law to acquire from the U.S. Navy the property on Yerba Buena Island that Caltrans needs to construct the new east span on the northern alignment recommended by MTC. The process may take some weeks, but should result in Caltrans holding title to the property needed for construction and operation of the new bridge.

The next key milestone is release of the final Army Corps of Engineers report expressing their opinion on the seismic safety of the new east span design. That report is now due for release on October 27.

Caltrans expects to release the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the project in December 2000, receive a federal record of decision on the FEIS in January 2001, and thereafter begin acquiring permits for construction. Contrary to an erroneous report in the *San Francisco Chronicle* yesterday, actual construction of the new east span could begin in 2001 and be completed by 2006.

If you need any further information, just let me know.

cc: Denis Mulligan, Caltrans



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Tuesday, October 10, 2000

**FHWA 64-00**  
Contact: Jim Pinkelman  
Tel.: 202-366-0660

**USDOT Announces Land Transfer Agreement  
For San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge in California**

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater today announced that the Department of Transportation will use authority available under federal law to transfer to California land needed for building a new eastern span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. A new span is needed to withstand earthquakes and provide a "lifeline" facility between Oakland and San Francisco in the event of a major earthquake.

"This is an important step forward for this vital project," Secretary Slater said. "Given the seismic vulnerability of the existing bridge, it is time to advance this project to protect the economy and safety of the entire San Francisco area."

The U.S. Navy owns land on Yerba Buena Island that will be needed for the proposed construction. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), an agency of USDOT, will notify the Navy this week that it is transferring the land from the Navy to the state of California based on a longstanding provision in federal law that permits federal land transfers for the Interstate Highway System. The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge is on the Interstate system.

The land is needed under various design and location alternatives for the new span. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is scheduled to complete a study later in October on the design selected by the California Department of Transportation for a northern alignment location of the new span. On September 22, 2000, in an "Interim Final Report," the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers concluded, "... a replacement alternative is the path that most quickly resolves the exposure of the public to the seismic vulnerabilities of the existing structure."

"We are pleased that we have been able to reach an agreement on this land transfer," FHWA Administrator Kenneth R. Wykle said. "The agreement will advance this project to improve safety, which is the highest transportation priority of the Clinton-Gore administration."

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